

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

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FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2577

INFO AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE

AMCONSUL DOUALA

AMCONSUL KADUNA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS, PINT, NI

SUBJECT: ARMY-CIVILIAN CLASHES IN SOUTH EASTERN STATE

1. NIGERIAN NEWSPAPERS REPORT CLASH CHRISTMAS DAY BETWEEN SOLDIERS AND CIVILIANS AT UGEP, AGRICULTURAL TOWN OF 45,000 IN SOUTH EASTERN STATE NEAR EAST CENTRAL STATE TOWN OF AFIKPO. SITUATION REPORTED UNDER CONTROL DECEMBER 26, BUT DEATH TOLL CONTINUES TO CLIMB; REACHED 18 ON DECEMBER 29, INCLUDING AT LEAST THREE SOLDIERS. REPORTS INDICATE 600 HOUSES BURNT, 7,000 PERSONS HOMELESS, 30,000 IN HIDING OR FLEEING TO OTHER TOWNS. NEWS STORIES ALLEGE OUTBREAK BEGAN WHEN CIVILIANS BEAT SOLDIER TO DEATH. TROOPS FROM 35 BATTALION, STATION IN CALABAR, PLUS LARGE CONTINGENT OF POLICE SENT TO RESTORE ORDER. SOUTH EASTERN STATE GOVERNOR LT. COL. PAUL OMU; COMMANDER OF 13 INFANTRY BRIGADE, CALABAR, LT. COL. M.J. VATES; AND SOUTH EASTERN STATE POLICE COMMISSIONER MAGNUS EWEKA ARRIVED ON SCENC CHRISTMAS DAY, CONSOLED THE BEREAVED, COMFORTED THE WOUNDED, URGED THOSE WHO HAD FLED TO RETURN. LT. COL. VATSA ANNOUNCED COMMANDER OF 18 BATTALION, STATIONED IN UGEP HAS BEEN REPLACED WITH IMMEDIATE EFFECT, THAT SOLDIERS LIVING IN THE TOWN HAVE BEEN DISARMED AND CONFINED TO BARRACKS. ACUTE SHORTAGE OF FOOD, DRUGS AND CLOTHING

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REPORTED IN AREA.

2. FMG HAS MADE SPECIAL GRANT OF NAIRA ONE MILLION TO S.E.S. GOVERNMENT FOR DISBURSAL AS COMPENSATION TO VICTIMS, HAS APPOINTED THREE-MAN JUDICIAL TRIBUNAL TO INQUIRE INTO CAUSES OF INCIDENTS, MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS PREVENT FURTHER OUTBREAKS. TRIBUNAL WILL SIT IN CAMERA AND REPORT BY JANUARY 31, 1976.

3. COMMENT: IN SPITE OF COMMANDERS' STEPPED UP CAMPAIGN SINCE JULY COUP PERSUADE TROOPS BE ON THEIR BEST BEHAVIOR, SOLDIER-CIVILIAN RELATIONS REMAIN BASICALLY UNCHANGED--THAT IS TOUCHY AND SUSCEPTIBLE TO SPORADIC FLAREUPS.
EASUM

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